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The Popish doctrine of PURGATORY
repugnant to the Scripture account
of remission through the blood of
CHRIST. 12

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By J. E A R L E, D. D.

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I JOHN i. 7.

— *The blood of Jesus Christ his Son
cleanseth us from all sin.*

FIND this text made use of by antient and modern Protestants as an argument against the Popish doctrine of purgatory: and I think it affords such a one as cannot be fairly answered. I have therefore chosen it for the foundation of what I have to offer upon the head assign'd me; and propose to discourse from it in the following *method*.

I. I would represent the true sense and proper import of the words.

II. Shew what is the *Romish* doctrine of purgatory.

III. Argue against it from it's repugnancy to the scripture doctrine of cleansing from sin by the blood of Christ, as before represented.

IV. Answer what may be objected against the conclusiveness of the argument proposed.

I. I would fairly state the true sense and import of the words.

1. By the *blood of Christ*, we are to understand his death, which was the natural consequence of shedding his blood. And by this manner of expressing our Lord's death is signify'd his dying as an expiatory sacrifice, and so answering the types exhibited in the law of *Moses*; concerning which the author of the Epistle to the *Hebrews* speaks very fully, and particularly in the ninth chapter, to which I refer you.

2. By the *cleansing* here attributed to the blood of Christ is meant directly and immediately a *sacrificial purgation*. I do not exclude a moral one as consequent upon it: for no doubt we owe our whole salvation to the *precious blood of Christ*, who was deliver'd up to death for us as *a lamb without blemish and without spot*, that he might *redeem us from our vain conversation*, 1 Pet. i. 19. He *gave himself for us that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify to himself a peculiar people zealous of good works*, Titus ii. 14. His *blood purgeth the conscience from dead works, that we may serve the living God*, Heb. ix. 14. Thus our *hearts are purify'd by faith*, and Christ is of God *made to us sanctification*, Acts xv. 9. 1 Cor. i. 30.

But I say the expression in the text seems directly to import a *sacrificial purgation* or being pardon'd by way of atonement, or in view

to

to an expiatory sacrifice ; such a *forgiveness of sins* as is a *cleansing from all unrighteousness* by the blood of the Son of God ; upon which account God is represented as *faithful and just* in thus forgiving, *ver. 9.* according to that of *St. Paul*, *Rom. iii. 26.* *That he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus.* However, the cleansing spoken of in the text, and the next verse but one, must I think refer to the remission of sin, because the expressions have a plain reference to a sacrifice. And these places in *St. John* are parallel to that of the author to the *Hebrews*, ix. 14. Where the blood of Christ is said to *purge the conscience* from dead works. This the marginal references of the *Vulgate* shew to be the sense of the *Romish* divines. And very justly ; for it is the same phraseology in both Epistles, and the sense of it is very evidently sacrificial in that to the *Hebrews*. For, as *Dr. Whitby* observes, “ τὸ
 “ καὶ καθαρίζειν here, as the comparison clearly
 “ shews, being in sense the same with ἀκα-
 “ ρίζειν in the verse preceding, must signify
 “ the cleansing of the conscience not *from*
 “ the inclination to sin, by the Holy Spirit, but
 “ from the guilt of sin, by the blood shed for
 “ the remission of it. And, saith he, this is
 “ the constant sense of the word καὶ καθαρίζειν
 “ in the Old Testament, when join’d with
 “ ἀπὸ ἀμαρτιῶν. Hence then it follows,
 “ that the dead works from which their con-
 “ science was to be thus cleansed must signify
 “ works which deserved death, &c.”

Thus

Thus I understand these words as expressing what we have in many other places of scripture, which it is not at present necessary to mention.-- It may be sufficient to refer you to that of St. Paul, Eph. i. 7. *In whom we have redemption thro' his blood, the forgiveness of sins.* Of this forgiveness I take St. John here to speak.

3. The *persons* thus said to be cleansed or forgiven their sins, are, no doubt, believers, all that are truly so, who *with the heart believe*. According to that of St. Paul, Rom. x. 10. *With the heart man believeth unto righteousness. Remission of sins is thro' faith in Christ's blood,* Rom. iii. 25. *And the righteousness of God is by faith in Jesus Christ unto all, and whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins,* Acts x. 43. So chap. xiii. 38, 39. *Be it known to you therefore, men and brethren, that through this man is preached unto you forgiveness of sins, and by him all that believe are justify'd from all things, &c. i. e.* all true believers, whose character is, that they *walk in the light*, and not *in darkness*, and prove their faith by their works; for we deny a dead faith to be justifying, whatever our enemies may pretend.

This doctrine of the forgiveness of sins for the sake of Christ, upon faith professed in baptism, was always an article of the Christian creed. I say *for the sake of Christ*: “ Unto
 “ which consideration (says the learned author
 “ of the critical History of the Creed) the wa-
 “ ter in baptism, and the washing our bodies
 “ therewith, directs us; since it is impossible
 “ the sprinkling of that should purge away
 “ the

“ the stain and guilt of sin in any other way
 “ and manner than as it hath reference to,
 “ and is a representation of the blood of the
 “ *Lamb of God*, which was spilt to take away
 “ the sins of the world. For water under the
 “ evangelical dispensation is in itself no more
 “ available to the purging of the conscience,
 “ and the pacifying divine wrath, than the
 “ blood of bulls and goats was under the *Mo-*
 “ *saical* and legal œconomy.” p. 369.

The persons thus cleansed, I say, are true
 believers, such as believe with the heart, and
 make a free profession of their faith, and live
 answerably to it. Of these it is said,

4. That the blood of Christ cleanseth them
from all sin, all manner of sin, as it is expressed
Matt. xii. 13. excepting only the *blasphemy a-*
gainst the Holy Ghost, which is inconsistent with
 faith in Christ. By him all that believe are
justified from all things: all sins of whatever
 kind or degree, and however circumstanced and
 distinguished; whether committed before that
 faith whereby we are justified, or after it. The
 forgiveness of all and all manner of sins before
 men's conversion to God by Christ, was never
 denied (that I can find) by any professed Chri-
 stians. But besides, all sins committed after
the washing of regeneration, and renewing of
the Holy Ghost, tho' never so scandalous and of-
 fensive, are, upon renewal of faith and repen-
 tance, pardonable both by God and the church.
 This indeed was deny'd by the *Novatians*,
 who declared, “ that there was *no mercy for*
them who should fall after baptism, at least,
 “ that

“ that the church could not forgive them, and
 “ receive them into communion again, but
 “ must for ever exclude them her society, and
 “ leave them to the judgment of God.” In
 opposition to which opinion the article of for-
 giveness of sins is thought to have been added
 to the creed in the time of St. *Cyprian*. See
Crit. Hist. p. 360.

Now this scripture doctrine, own'd by the
 primitive doctors of the church, whom we call
Fathers, is the doctrine of the Reformed or
Protestant churches, viz. That to true belie-
 vers all their sins are freely forgiven by God,
 upon the account of the sacrifice which Christ
 offer'd when he died by shedding his blood on
 the cross, and which he ever lives to plead in
 their behalf. Thus it is said, that *the blood*
of Jesus Christ the son of God cleanseth from all sin.

II. I am next to shew what the *church of*
Rome teaches upon this head or article of the
 forgiveness of sins. And here, to do her ju-
 stice, she does own,

1. That Christ did *die for our sins according*
to the scripture; that his blood is infinitely me-
 ritorious; and even say, that one drop of his
 blood is sufficient to redeem mankind,----what-
 ever they mean by it----

2. That all true believers, for the sake of
 Christ's meritorious death, are deliver'd from
 eternal death, and have a sure title to everlast-
 ing life.

3. They say, that such as die immediately
 upon their baptism, and all that suffer martyr-
 dom,

dom, and such as are fully purged before death, go directly to heaven, and enjoy the beatifical vision, not waiting for it till the day of judgment.

4. But they pretend, that such as die guilty of lesser sins, which they call *venial*, before they have repented for these ordinary failings; and such as having been formerly guilty of greater sins, have not made full atonement for them to the divine justice; that such must go to *purgatory*: which, they tell us, is a middlestate of souls which depart this life in God's grace, yet not without some lesser stains or guilt of punishment, which retards them from entering into heaven. (I give you this account in the very words of a little piece, which is industriously spread about at present, called a *Profession of Catholick Faith*, &c.)

5. Tho' the particular place where these souls suffer, or the quality of the torments which they suffer, be not decided by the church, yet it is owned they do suffer, and are in torment; nay the catechism set out by order of the council of *Trent*, calls it a * *purgatory-fire*; and some of their allowed doctors represent the sufferings there, as caused by the *same fire as torments the damned in hell*: yea *Bellarmino* owns, that almost all their divines teach, *that the damned and the souls in purgatory are tormented in the same fire, and in the same place*.

6. They do not pretend that these sufferings are for their *moral* purification, (as the afflictions of this life are allowed to be) but for their

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cleansing

* Cat. ad Paroch.

cleansing in a way of *satisfaction* to the justice of God. So they mean by purgatory, not (as one wou'd at first hearing it imagine, and perhaps many mistakingly apprehend) a place or state in which the remainders of vitious habits or wrong inclinations are to be worn out or purged away---for this they absolutely deny--but a place in which they are not to repent or be amended, but to satisfy; and their purgatory-fire purges the conscience from venial sins, (and some remainder of the guilt of mortal ones too) as the blood of Christ does from *dead works*; that is, makes satisfaction for them to the justice of God.

7. They say, that souls in this distress are helped by the suffrages of the faithful; that is, by the prayers and alms offered for them, and principally by the holy sacrifice of the mass, (this is the account given by the forementioned author) and Papal indulgences, &c.

8. They make this doctrine (for the substance of it) an article of faith, and enforce it with an anathema, *i. e.* curse those that do not believe it, or at least all that have the courage to say they do not. For thus runs the 30th canon of the sixth session of the council of Trent.

“ If any shall say, that after receiving the
 “ grace of justification, any penitent sinner has
 “ his fault so forgiven, and the guilt of eter-
 “ nal punishment taken away, that there re-
 “ mains no guilt of temporal punishment to be
 “ discharged either in this world, or that to
 “ come, in purgatory, before he can enter in-
 “ to

“ to the kingdom of heaven, let him be accursed.”

Thus I have given you a brief account of that purgatory, which the church of *Rome* obliges her people to believe upon pain of damnation. I am now

III. To *argue* against it from its *repugnancy* to the *scripture doctrine* of cleansing from sin by the blood of Christ, as before proposed : of which you have heard more largely in a late discourse of being justified freely by the grace of God, thro’ our Lord Jesus Christ. Which is not only a truth, but an essential article of the Christian faith. See *Rom. x. 3. 1 Cor. xv. 3. Gal. v. 4.* Now to shew the opposition of this doctrine of purgatory to that of justification by the free grace of God in Christ, I shall observe several things.

(1.) This doctrine derogates from those *perfections of God*, which in the work of redemption by Christ he designed to magnify----as

1. His *goodness*, grace, and mercy. This was it, that moved him *not to spare his own Son, but deliver him up for us all*, *Rom. viii. 32.* Thus *Ephes. i. 6, 7.* *To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved : In whom we have redemption thro’ his blood, the forgiveness of sins according to the riches of his grace. Herein God commendeth his love to us, that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us, Rom. v. 8.* So *1 John iv. 10.* *Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved*

us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.

Now what a reflection is it upon the love and grace of God, that after such a propitiation has been made, and such a satisfaction given, he should insist upon the sufferings of those, who *by faith in Jesus Christ are all his children*; and those too so terrible ones, and so long as may, for ought the patrons of purgatory can tell, amount to ten thousand times more than ever what all the saints upon earth suffer'd in the flesh comes to. Does this consist with the account we have even in the *Old Testament*, of his being the *Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering and abundant in goodness, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity, and transgression, and sin?* *Exod. xxxiv. 6, 7.* Do we not read of his being *gracious, and full of compassion, slow to anger, and ready to forgive, and plenteous in mercy?* *Psal. cxlv. 8. lxxxvi. 5.* Are we not told, that *he does not afflict willingly, nor grieve the children of men?* *Lam. iii. 33.* How moving are those expressions, *Hos. xi. 8. How shall I give thee up, Ephraim? How shall I deliver thee, Israel? How shall I make thee as Admah? How shall I set thee as Zeboim? My heart is turned within me, my repentings are kindled together!* Does God express himself so tenderly when his poor creatures are exposed to temporal judgments, and give reason for that exclamation of the prophet, *How great is his goodness?* *Zech. ix. 17:* And can we imagine that those who are reconciled to him by the

the death of his Son, and justify'd by his blood, can be tormented by him in a future state after so terrible a manner? In the *New Testament* we are told, that *God is love*, 1 John iv. 16. And is it to be thought he will so severely correct his children; *not for their good*: for the Papists do not pretend there is any spiritual improvement in purgatory: but merely *to receive satisfaction* for their faults; yea such "small faults as the best of his servants are more or less liable to:" * and that after his dear Son had *born their sins in his own body on the tree*? Is this the idea the church of Rome would give us of him who *is good to all*, and *whose tender mercies are over all his works*? Psal. cxlv. 9. Is this consistent with what we are told, that *like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him*? Do earthly parents, that have any bowels or understanding, deal thus with their children? Or if sometimes they do, can it be supposed that our heavenly Father is such a one as they are? Good God! what difference do these people make between thee, and those *fathers of the flesh*, who correct their children *after their own pleasure*!

I am well aware that the *goodness* of God is not to be impeach'd, *merely* because he punishes. But then I am also as sure as I can be of any thing, that he never afflicts but when the case necessarily requires it, or the affliction may turn to the sufferer's account; neither of which can be the case in this purgatory-fire, God *may*, without any derogation from his
more

* Profess. p. 34.

more awful attributes, omit to exact any thing from those for whom Christ died, by way of satisfaction, and therefore surely he *will*. And as for any benefit arising to the sufferers in purgatory, the *Papists* do not pretend to it; they own they cannot there merit, nor be improved. What benefit may arise from their sufferings to the *temporalities* of the church is another thing; but (I am desirous it should be noted and remembered) to the poor wretches in that place of torment no benefit can accrue from their being there: And therefore as neither the honour of God's perfections and government require it, nor their own advantage, I must again say, it seems inconsistent with that benignity of the divine nature, which he has taught us so much to magnify.

2. This doctrine derogates from the *wisdom* of God, which he design'd to magnify in the work of redemption thro' his Son's blood; *wherein he hath abounded towards us in all wisdom and prudence*, Eph. i. 8. I know the turn given to this text by some writers. But a * commentator, who is in every body's hands, in his notes upon it, has said a good deal to shew the wisdom of this dispensation of God in sending his Son into the world to suffer for our sins, and by his sufferings to make an atonement for them. I shall only refer you to him, and take it for granted at present; especially seeing the patrons of purgatory do not deny, that the doctrine of Christ crucified is the *power* of God and his *wisdom* too, 1 Cor. i. 24. Upon which
place

* Dr. *Whitby* in loc.

place their own *Estius* saith, “ which [wisdom]
 “ he [God] shew’d, in that he redeemed his
 “ elect by the humiliation and death of
 “ Christ.”

Now is it to the reputation of any wisdom, to use means that are wholly needless to answer the ends in view, and without which they could be every whit as well reach’d? Is not making satisfaction to the justice and law of God the end of Christ’s shedding his blood? Is not that a sufficient atonement, and every way adapted to the purpose of expiation, without the aid of any other method of satisfaction? I hope this will not be denied by those who have spoken so magnificently of *one single drop* of the precious blood which our Lord shed. What, is not the blood of God a plenary satisfaction? The church of *Rome* holds the full and proper divinity of our blessed Saviour; and upon that principle can they think it not enough, that *he was made sin, [a sin-offering] for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him,* 1 Cor. v. 21. but after all, we must satisfy for ourselves in purgatory-fire? Let me desire them to consider, whether this does not highly reflect upon the wisdom of God, that he should *lay upon his Son the iniquity of us all*, and then make us either bear a great deal of our own burden, or commute for it with *trifles*. I say *trifles*, for so are all the equivalents which the espousers of purgatory propose.

Men may be helped *there*, it seems, (and therefore to be sure may be kept *from thence*)
 “ by the suffrages of the faithful, that is by
 “ the

“ the prayers and alms offered for them:” That is, in short, by giving money to the church and its poor: and principally by the sacrifice of the Mass, which the priest must be well paid for offering.---I do not call prayers and alms a trifle *absolutely*; but when they pretend to come in aid of the perfect sacrifice, which Christ made, they are *worse* than trifles. As for the sacrifice of the mass, we must take leave to treat that in no other manner, till they have proved their famous doctrine of Transubstantiation. Otherwise, surely, saying a few *Latin* words over a piece of bread and a cup of wine, and presenting them before an altar, is too mean a thing to serve the purposes it pretends to answer.

Would a wise man, when he has received all proper and reasonable satisfaction for an offence, insist upon what can serve no manner of purpose? And can we think the wisdom of God will permit him to demand, beside a full price which he has received from his Son, an addition of things which cannot increase the sum a single mite? Is this the notion these men have of the *only wise God*?

3. This doctrine of purgatory carries in it a reflection upon the *justice* of God. If any thing could be added to the price with which we are bought, can justice insist upon it, when he has accepted the ransom? He might have chosen whether he would admit a substitution or vicarious punishment: and he had a right to insist upon such limitations as were proper in order to sinners having the benefit of such a dispensation

penfation. This he has done in fettling the covenant of grace, which is called the *everlasting covenant*, and is ratify'd in the Redeemer's blood. The fum of which is, that all true believers shall be faved from wrath, and live for ever, *John iii. 16. Whofoever believeth in him shall not perifh, but have everlafting life.* Now of the fatisfaction which Chrift made, under the limitations agreed to, God has declared his approbation and acceptance by raifing Chrift from the dead, and fending forth his Spirit to confirm the testimony of his ambaffadors, *to wit, that God was in Chrift reconciling the world unto himfelf, not imputing their trefpaffes, 2 Cor. v. 19.* And it follows, *ver. 21. For he hath made him to be fin for us who knew no fin, that we might be made the righteoufnefs of God in him.* And all this without any limitation, but this, that they believe and profefs, and *walk in the light, i. e. be holy in heart and life.* Not one word is faid of believers making fatisfaction for themfelves in a *middle ftate.* We are affured that *there is no condemnation to them that are in Chrift Jefus. Rom. viii. 1.* And therefore juftice itfelf can require nothing more befide what was ftipulated. So that I fay, the very juftice of God itfelf, which was design'd to be honour'd by this difpenfation, is flurred by representing him as making farther demands. We are bought with a price which our Redeemer has paid, and the payment of it folemnly acknowledged, and accepted in the behalf of all his living members, who bring forth fruit unto God: And can juftice demand more?

If it be no wrong to us, surely it would be injurious to his Son, with whom no *doubt* a righteous God will keep covenant; and it would be injustice not to do it. — But this leads me to observe, that,

4. This doctrine slurs the divine *truth* and sincerity. God is a *God of truth*; and in the sufferings of his Son, he fulfilled the promise made to the fathers. All the promises of forgiveness under the Old Testament, had surely a reference to the Messiah, (as no man can doubt, that reads the 53^d of *Isaiab.*) Now how full and strong do they run! *Forgiving iniquity, transgression and sin.* Transgression is said to be forgiven, sin cover'd, iniquity not imputed, *Psal.* xxxii. 1. *With the Lord there is mercy, and with him is plenteous redemption. And he shall redeem Israel from all his iniquities,* cxxx. 7, 8. *Tho' their sins be as scarlet they shall be as white as snow, tho' they be red like crimson they shall be as wool,* *Isa.* i. 18. *He will have mercy; he will abundantly pardon,* *lv.* 7. We read of the greatness and multitudes of his tender mercies. *I will, saith God, forgive their iniquities, and remember their sin no more,* *Jer.* xxxi. 34. And in the prophet *Micah*, vii. 18, &c. (who foretold where Christ should be born) we have a strong passage, *Who is a God like unto thee, that pardoneth iniquity, and passeth by the transgression of the remnant of his heritage? He retaineth not his anger for ever, because he delighteth in mercy; he will turn again; he will have compassion upon us; he will subdue our iniquities, and thou wilt cast all our*
sins

ins into the depths of the sea. And then it follows, *Thou wilt perform thy truth to Jacob.* (I hope the Papists will bear with this profusion of quotations out of the Old Testament, since they make use of so many in defence of their purgatory-fire.) Now, *Rom. iii. 4. Let God be true, but every man a liar.* Accordingly, *now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets; even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe, &c. 21, 22.* What said the scripture? *Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness.* Nor was it written for his sake alone, but for us also, if we believe on him that raised up Jesus from the dead, who was delivered for our offences and raised again for our justification, *Rom. iv. 23.* Those things which God before had shewed by the mouth of all his prophets that Christ should suffer, be hath so fulfilled, *Acts iii. 18.*

Now if God had promised an absolute and plenary forgiveness of sin thro' Christ, to all that believe, *repent and are converted,* (ver. 19.) does it not reflect upon his faithfulness, if when the affair comes forth, there appears such a reserve as was never taken notice of in the original declaration of grant, nor specified in the actual conveyance. If the gospel, after its publication by those to whom God bare witness, be declared to be according to the tenor of the ancient evangelical promises to the fathers, without specifying any alteration; does this do honour to God's truth and sincerity,

if it appears that there was a limitation unknown and unthought of by the church of old, and not plainly signified upon the opening a new dispensation?

And this seems by the way, to be a special hardship upon believers under this new dispensation, that they are liable to the torments of purgatory-fire, which our adversaries will not say was prepar'd for the Old Testament saints: There having been, it seems, a *Limbus* appointed for them; in which, according to the account they give of the matter, there was no torment.

So that in short the doctrine of purgatory seems to be contrary to all our notions of the mercy, wisdom, justice and faithfulness of God, which he designed to honour in the gospel salvation.

(2.) Farther, this doctrine is *dishonourable to Christ*, who is, by his all-cleansing blood, *the propitiation for our sins*, 1 John ii. 2. St. John tells us, that *all men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father*, v. 23. The proper and full divinity of the Son is not deny'd by the church of Rome. So that any doctrine derogatory to him is equally criminal as if it concern'd the Father. Now the apostle Paul, (whom the council of Trent makes the author of the Epistle to the *Hebrews*) tells us, that Christ has by himself purged our Sins, i. 3. That he *put away sin by the sacrifice of himself*, ix. 26. That by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified, x. 14. i. e. "completely expiated the sins of them
" that

“ that are sanctified thro’ faith in his blood,
 “ procuring the remission of sins.”* And of this,
 faith he, the *Holy Ghost also is a witness*; for
after he had said before, This is the covenant,
&c. he adds, *Their sins and their iniquities*
I will remember no more, ver. 15, 16, 17.

Therefore any other methods of expiation pretended to are a reflection upon the atonement which Christ made as insufficient. And I would intreat the Romanists to consider whether *his* blood is not sufficient to cleanse from all sin, without the torments of purgatory, or the poor equivalents that are to supersede them. They and we agree in being amaz’d at it as infinite condescension, that God should be manifested in the flesh, and in that flesh bear our sins in order to their expiation: and can it enter into our minds, that the atonement *he* made should not of itself answer all purposes to true Christians, without there being any manner of room for the merits of *sinners*, (for so all the saints in their best estate on earth were) in order to our deliverance from that torment by which they must otherwise expiate their own offences?

Is this honouring Christ to tell us of a state of torment, which those for whom he died must go to, and tarry an unknown time, till they are reliev’d by the suffrages of the faithful, in order to satisfy for those errors for which the Son of God has shed his most precious blood? Is it to the honour of Christ that he cannot, or will not save the members of
 his

* *Whitby* in loc.

his own body, (which all true Christians are) from the whole demerit of their sins, without the aid of such merits as those of a *Thomas a Becket*, dispensed out of a treasury kept by an *Alexander*, a *Boniface*, or a *Julius*? And yet thus it seems it must be, that either true penitents must make full atonement for their greater sins here, or go to purgatory to effect it when they die. And some of God's best servants, if they happen to die suddenly before they have repented of an idle word, (which they give as an instance of * *venial sin*,) must have the same lot.

Blessed *Jesus*! Is this the love of thine *which passeth knowledge*? Is this what thy apostle calls thy *unsearchable riches*? Is this the *grace* which he celebrates, that *tho' thou wast rich, yet for our sake thou becamest poor*; that *we, thro' thy poverty, might be made rich*? Was this the meaning of that call of thine, *Come unto me all ye that are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you rest*, that they should still be liable to a yoke so much heavier than that of Jewish rites and ceremonies, even a sort of temporary hell? Is it thus, that the *Lamb of God takes away the sins of the world*, and that thy *blood cleanseth us from all sin*, that after all our faith and

* The author of the *profession of catholick faith*, &c. speaks cautiously. But if any would know what exceeding great crimes are reckon'd but slight and venial faults by the Popish doctrine, let them consult the 8th chapter of a book entitled, *The practical divinity of the Papists discover'd to be destructive of christianity and men's souls*, publish'd in the year 1676, by Mr. *David Clarkson*, who was ejected from *Mortlack* in *Surry* for non-conformity, and preached the 12th sermon in the *morning exercises against Popery* concerning justification.

and proof given of its being genuine, we must make atonement for our selves here; or if even providence itself by sudden death, or the loss of reason, prevents our doing it here, must do it in the horrors of a purgatory? Hast thou so paid our debt, that there is a large part of it which we must discharge our selves, or our friends for us, before we can get to heaven, or else must be cast into a prison from whence we cannot go till we have *paid the uttermost farthing*, Matt. v. 26. which text the *Profession*, &c. alledges for a proof of purgatory, and pretends the authority of St. *Cyprian*: of which hereafter.

(3.) This purgatory-fire is *dishonourable to the Holy Spirit*, whose office is to apply the redemption purchased by Christ, and whom the church of *Rome* owns to “be with the Father” and the Son together worshipped and glorified.”----He was promised to *guide* the apostles (who were appointed to publish the gospel salvation) *into all truth*. But this important doctrine of purgatory either was not revealed to them, or else they *shunned to declare* this part of the *counsel of God*, as far as we can find in their writings; and that it was handed down from them by any unwritten tradition, we must have better evidence than has yet been produced before we can believe it. And sure it is a dishonour to the Holy Ghost to suppose him to direct a company of men (whom they call a *council*) to anathematize those who do not receive what was not written in those scriptures which were given by his inspiration; especially if

if such a doctrine stands in full and direct repugnancy to an essential article of the Christian faith, as this doctrine of purgatory does; at least it seems to do so: and can we suppose the Holy Ghost would no where give us any account of this middle state of souls which depart this life *in God's grace*, and yet *into torment*? That he should mention heaven and hell so expressly (when a future state of rewards and punishments appeared reasonable to many that had no revelation) and at the same time should take no notice of this same purgatory-fire, which cannot be known but by revelation; and that he should give no manner of directions about the method of escaping or getting out of it? And thus we must speak till the partizans of *Rome* can agree to point us out to some scripture that speaks plainly to their purpose.

Besides, is it not dishonourable to the Holy Spirit, to represent his work in the application of what Christ has purchased to believers as imperfect? Is not what he does, when he works faith in us, and so unites us to Christ, and makes us *partakers of the divine nature*, 2 Pet. i. 4. sufficient to qualify us for the full remission of sin purchased by Christ, without our own sufferings in purgatory, by which it is pretended that the merits of Christ are applied? Surely there is enough in what the Spirit works in believers to put them in a condition to receive the full benefit of what Christ has purchased.--- And we ought to think so, seeing faith and repentance are all that is mention'd in scripture

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ture as necessary to this purpose, and no notice taken of other satisfactions.

I shall only add, Is it to the honour of the blessed Spirit of God, that he should encourage believers in several places of scripture to hope for a freedom from all uneasiness, and an admission into paradise, upon the dissolution of their earthly tabernacles, when at the same time they are exposed to a middle state of torment, in which they may suffer more intense pains than ever they felt on earth, even when they were *wearry with their groaning, all night have made their bed to swim, and watered their couch with their tears*, Psal. vi. 6. But this leads me to another head,

(4.) This doctrine directly tends to spoil much of the comfort, which should arise in believers minds from a sense of their reconciliation to God, thro' the blood of his Son; and consequently to abate the gratitude they should express, and the freedom they should use in their approaches to their heavenly Father. Of this the apostle speaks, *Rom. v. 1---5. Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God thro' our Lord Jesus Christ. By whom also we have access, by faith, into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God. And not only so, but we glory in tribulations also, knowing that tribulation worketh patience, and patience experience, and experience hope, and hope maketh not ashamed, because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost, which is given to us.* From this, and such like passages in scripture, all that are in the grace

of God, (as every one that after death goes to purgatory is supposed to be) may justly take great comfort ; but what a damp must it cast upon their spirits, when they think of the satisfaction they are to make in the purgatory-fire? And how can they, as otherwise they might, *joy in God thro' our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom they have now receiv'd the atonement?* Rom. v.

11. Christian joy is the best friend to gratitude, and all the proper expressions of it in the *fruits of righteousness*, and therefore the apostle would have believers *rejoice evermore*. *Rejoice*, saith he, *in the Lord always ; and again I say rejoice*, Phil. iv. 4. And I cannot help thinking, that a doctrine which has such an unfriendly aspect upon the comfort of believers, is by no means dictated by the *Holy Ghost the Comforter*.

It certainly abates the relief we should find against the slavish fear of death, when we think that tho' Christ has *overcome him that had the power of death, that is, the devil* ; yet for ought we know, or can know, without some sort of revelation, we may happen to lie in purgatory till the day of judgment ; so must lose the comfort of all those texts that would encourage us to look on death with pleasure, and make us *desire to be dissolved, and be with Christ in paradise* ; since unless we are not only in the grace of God, but something very extraordinary too, we shall not be so happy as the penitent thief, who was with Christ in paradise the day he expired ; but may perhaps lie a great while in extremity of pain, even as long as our bodies shall

shall continue in the grave. If this be *dying in the Lord*, and *sleeping in Jesus*, and the *rest* which good men are to expect when they put off this tabernacle, the scriptures have been strangely misunderstood, and that not only by us poor hereticks, but by the earliest fathers of the church, for whom our purgatory-fire-men profess the greatest reverence, and by whose *unanimous consent* they are engaged to *interpret* the holy oracles. * *These* all agree, that good men, when they died, were presently in a *state of happiness*. This was the sense of the primitive church for at least the first four centuries, as has been abundantly evidenced by the divines of the Reformation; and we stand ready to maintain it, as often as we are call'd to it. I shall only give you a passage out of *St. Cyprian*, which is greatly to my present purpose; and I single out that father, because our present convert-makers mention him as interpreting the text which speaks of *paying the uttermost farthing*, in proof of their purgatory, as I observed before.---- “ Let us embrace, saith he, the day
 “ that assigns to every one his habitation, that
 “ delivers us from these worldly snares, and re-
 “ stores us to the heavenly kingdom. Who,
 “ being abroad, would not hasten to return
 “ into his own country? Who, hastening to
 “ sail home, would not heartily wish for a
 “ good wind, that he might speedily embrace
 “ his friends? We may reckon paradise for our
 “ country; we have begun already to have the
 “ patriarchs for our parents; why then do we

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“ not

* See Creed of *Pius IV.*

“ not hasten and run to see our country, and
 “ salute our parents? A great number of friends
 “ expect us there; a numerous company of pa-
 “ rents, brethren and sons, desire us, already
 “ secure of their own immortality, but now
 “ solicitous about our salvation. How great
 “ must their and our joy be, in the mutual
 “ seeing and embracing each other? What
 “ must be the pleasure of the heavenly king-
 “ doms, where there is no fear of death, but a
 “ certainty of eternal life? There is a glorious
 “ choir of the apostles, there is the number of
 “ the exulting prophets, there is the innumer-
 “ able company of martyrs, crowned for the
 “ victory of their fight and passion; there are
 “ the triumphing virgins, who, by the strength
 “ of continency, subdued the concupiscence of
 “ the flesh and body; there are the charitable,
 “ who are rewarded for their works of righ-
 “ teousness, in feeding and giving to the poor;
 “ who, by keeping the precepts of the Lord,
 “ conveyed their earthly patrimony unto the
 “ heavenly treasury. To these, dearly beloved
 “ brethren, let us hasten, and wish to be spee-
 “ dily with these, that so we may speedily
 “ come to Christ.”

Thus this father, who wrote in the third cen-
 tury, comforted the Christians of his age against
 the fear of death, and exhorted them chearful-
 ly to receive it.* And if this be consistent
 with the modern doctrine of purgatory, I am
 content they shall have *St. Cyprian* for their
 patron.

However,

* See *Crit. Hist. of the Creed*, p. 202.

However, the holy scripture (and THAT is the religion of Protestants) mentions nothing but rest and comfort, joy and blessedness to those, who die in the faith of him, who has *loved them and washed them from their sins in his own blood*, Rev. i. 5. They are said to *rest from their labours*, Rev. xiv. 13 ; which, as archbishop Tillotson observes, “ they cannot be said to do, “ who are in a state of great anguish and torment, as those are supposed to be, who are “ in purgatory.” Nor is it easy to imagine, why they should have so much courage as to be willing to be *absent from the body*, if they are to be no otherwise *present with the Lord* * that bought them, than is consistent with the horrors and agonies of that middle place of torment.----If it be said, that this *rest and presence with the Lord*, is peculiar to martyrs, apostles, and some very good men, I would know what authority they have for that limitation ; and I am sure that must be a very plain authority that can be set in opposition to what has been offered upon this argument, by our Reformed writers.----This leads me to the next branch of my discourse, *viz.*

IV. To answer what may be *objected* against the conclusiveness of the argument upon which I have insisted, *viz.* That the *Romish* tenet of purgatory is opposite to the scripture doctrine, of being cleansed from all sin by the blood of Christ, as before represented.----All their arguments to prove purgatory are objections against my discourse ; and such of them as are material

* 2 Cor. v. 8.

rial shall be consider'd. — They plead scripture, tradition, and reason ; with what evidence let us see.

1. *Scripture* is alledg'd. And here I frankly own, that all the arguments I have offer'd from the doctrine of the plenary satisfaction of Christ against purgatory, must be given up, if it has plain scripture to support it. Then instead of rejecting it we must reconcile it as well as we can with those texts that seem to make against it ; and shew there is no *real* contradiction between the two articles of faith, and that they only *seem* repugnant when they are very well consistent. Thus, we own the punishing of sinners with *everlasting destruction* to be consistent with all we say of the love of God, and the grace of Christ ; because it appears plainly from scripture, that the finally impenitent, and unbelieving, can have no relief by the great propitiation which we have been speaking of. Thus we admit also, that believers themselves are to wait the whole time of life, before they can be freed from all the afflictions and temptations which now make them so uneasy ; yea, and must tarry till the great day before they receive their perfect consummation and blessing ; and that notwithstanding the Redeemer's bearing their sins, and dying for them, they must all die, and their bodies see corruption ; because scripture has assured, what experience confirms, that *it is appointed for all men once to die*. And tho' the blood of the Son of God was sufficient to have secured all believers an immediate translation into full consummate happiness, both in
body

body and soul, yet we own that things are otherwise ordered by the divine wisdom, as appears in fact.

In like manner, if it appear'd from plain scripture, that believers must make such a satisfaction as is pretended in purgatory, we must be content to adore the riches of God's love, and the grace of Christ, that however, they shall not finally and for ever perish, but at last have eternal life : I say *plain* scripture, and not from a few dark texts wrested to serve a turn, and which no man would have ever thought to be to the purpose, if he had not first taken the doctrine for granted.

And this I verily believe to be the case. The church of *Rome* saw fit, for several *valuable considerations*, to enact the belief of a purgatory ; and then all the wit of her ablest men was employ'd to search for scriptures that might support it. Were not this the bottom of the business, could they possibly produce so many texts that are evidently nothing to the purpose. For instance, some of them say, that the flaming sword, mention'd *Gen. iii. 24.* was a " witness " to sinners, that they must pass thro' purgatory " to paradise." To which I hope I need make no answer ; but shall only remark, in the words of *one* of our fathers (who made a vigorous stand against Popery fifty years ago,) " A flaming sword seem'd a good weapon, and they " were willing to take it into their hands ; and " indeed their great argument for all their articles has been fire and sword."*

Bellar-

* Mr. *West's* sermon in the *Morning Exercises* against Popery.

Bellarmino himself alledges, *Psal. lxvi. 12. We walked thro' fire and water, and thou broughtest us into a wealthy place.* To which, saith *Mr. Bramstone* †, we will answer him in the words of an applauded Bishop of their own (*Fisher of Rochester.*) “ I approve not such trifling as “ this, which explains this place of purgatory.” And indeed all arguments they bring from the Old Testament, are arrant triflings. *Bellarmino* in effect owns it, when he confesses they are (all *but one*) only probable arguments : which are very unfit to establish an article of faith, which must be receiv'd upon pain of damnation :---for so the Cardinal expressly declares, that he must burn “ for ever in hell that “ denies purgatory.”

You will be perhaps curious to know what that *single* testimony from the Old Testament is, which the great champion of the church of *Rome* so much confides in.---But perhaps you will be surpris'd when I tell you that you can't find it in your Bible, but must look for it in the Apocrypha, *2 Maccab. xii. 41, &c.* However, as this book by the confession of our adversaries was never receiv'd as canonical by the Jews, to whom were *committed the oracles of God*, I shall be excus'd from answering the passage they refer to. And may justly add, that (supposing it was what the council of *Trent* has declar'd it,) it is no ways clear for the proof of that to which it is apply'd by them. This is affirm'd by our excellent *Primate* (to whom the Protestant religion and liberty itself owes

† *Answer to texts which Papists cite for purgatory, p. 609.*

owes so much, that while men have any value for either, his name will remembred with honour,) and what he asserts he proves so fully, that I shall only refer to what he has said in his discourse on purgatory, *p.* 14, 15, 16. To which if our modern disputants have any thing to reply, I assure them they shall not want an answer. I shall only add, what has been often observed, and particularly by the learned *L. Capellus* *, that “ it is astonishing, that the “ doctors of the church of *Rome* should bring “ evidence out of the Old Testament to prove “ purgatory, when they will not affirm that “ there was any such thing, or that any when “ they died went to it.” I add, especially, that they should lay their main stress upon a book whose character is so dubious, that one of their own writers tells us, that the doctrine of purgatory is more certain and evident than the authority of that book; and that more evident things are not to be proved by those that are less so.†

Indeed if they will make out their doctrine of purgatory, we must expect it from the New Testament; where we may imagine such an important article of faith to be clearly revealed, if there be any thing in it. Here their late author ‡ presents us with that of *St. Paul*, 1 Cor. iii. 13---15. *Every man's work shall be made manifest. For the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is. If any*
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man's

* *De purgatorio*, *p.* 45.

† *Soto. in Thef. Leyd.* *p.* 506.

‡ *Profession, &c.* *p.* 35.

man's work abide which he hath built there-upon, he shall receive a reward. If any man's work shall be burnt, he shall suffer loss; but he himself shall be saved, yet so as by fire. But how often might a man read over this passage before he would find purgatory in it; unless he came with a strong prepossession in favour of that opinion. If we consider the scope of the apostle (by which surely we are to interpret his writings,) we shall find that he is speaking of some who held indeed the foundation of Christianity, but built upon it such doctrines and practices as would not bear the trial; which he represents as *wood, hay and stubble*, which are not proof against the fire. Such a person, the apostle tells us, hath brought himself into a very dangerous state, tho' he would not deny the possibility of his salvation, as archbishop Tillotson observes, and adds, that being saved so as by fire, *or out of the fire*, is a proverbial phrase used not only in scripture but in profane authors to signify a narrow escape out of great danger. Thus *Amos iv. 11. Ye were as a fire-brand pluck'd out of the burning*, and *Jude 23. Others save with fear, plucking them out of the fire.*

But whatever be the sense of this passage, is it so plain a declaration of their doctrine of purgatory, that the evidence of it cannot be withstood, and no other probable account can be given of it? Does it appear so plainly from this text, that (according to our author) “ such
 “ as both in their faith, and in the practice of
 “ their lives have stuck to the foundation,
 “ which

“ which is Christ Jesus, so as not to forfeit
 “ his grace by mortal sin, tho’ they have been
 “ otherwise guilty of great imperfections by
 “ building wood, hay and stubble upon this
 “ foundation, (yea though the sins of which
 “ they have been guilty are but small, which
 “ even God’s best servants are more or less liable
 “ to, as he had said just before,) that such
 “ must pass through a fiery trial, and that by
 “ it is meant *their purgatory*?”* Is it evidently
 the design of the apostle in this passage to lay
 it down as an article of faith, that such persons
 as they mention must make satisfaction in pur-
 gatory-fire? Does the scope of the apostle na-
 turally lead to this, and can he not be under-
 stood of the damage that the false apostles and
 their deluded followers should sustain by cor-
 rupting the pure gospel of Christ, and de-
 parting from its simplicity upon worldly con-
 siderations? Are the Papists sure that no un-
 prejudiced person can understand it (as reason-
 ably at least) of such doctrines and practices
 which might be built upon the foundations
 of Christianity to the great hazard and danger
 of men’s salvation, and particularly of the do-
 ctrine of purgatory? Concerning which the
 excellent author before mention’d tells us †,
 “ they mean by it an estate of temporary
 “ punishments after this life, from which men
 “ may be translated into heaven by the prayers
 “ of the living and the sacrifice of the *Mafs*;
 “ and adds, That this doctrine was not known
 “ in the primitive church, nor can be proved
 E 2 “ from

* Profession, &c. p. 35.

† Serm. 11.

“ from scripture, we have the free acknowledg-
 “ ment of as learned and eminent men as any
 “ of their church ; which is to acknowledge,
 “ that it is a superstructure upon the Christian
 “ religion. And tho’ indeed in one sense it be
 “ a building of *gold* and *silver* upon the founda-
 “ tion of Christianity, considering the vast re-
 “ venues which this doctrine (and that of *in-*
 “ *dulgences* which depends upon it) brings into
 “ the church, yet I doubt not but in the apo-
 “ stle’s sense it will be found *hay* and *stubble*.
 “ But how groundless soever it be, it’s too gain-
 “ ful a doctrine to be parted with.” And he
 has a passage in another * sermon to the same
 purpose. “ They pretend a mighty bank and
 “ treasure of merits in the church, which they
 “ sell to the people for ready money, giving
 “ them bills of exchange from the *Pope* to *pur-*
 “ *gatory*, when they who grant them have no
 “ reason to think they will avail them or be
 “ accepted in the other world.”

It may be said, this interpretation of St. *Paul*’s
 words was the sense of a poor blind heretick.
 But I would fain know how it came to pass,
 that so many doctors of their own church
 could not see this article of faith in so plain
 a text. How was it that one should say, †
 that “ we ought not to lay any stress in the proof
 “ of purgatory upon passages of scripture,” par-
 ticularly mentioning this which I am now con-
 sidering. And that their martyr ‡ *Fisher* should
 own, that “ he could not readily find any
 “ one

* Serm. 30.

† Petrus à Soto, in sacerdot. Instruct. Lect. 1. de purg.

‡ Contra Lutherum artic. 18.

“ one scripture, that would force one to confess
 “ a purgatory : and if there be any such, faith
 “ he, it has hitherto escap’d the most diligent
 “ enquirers.” I should not mention *Peter Cotton*
 the Jesuit, if I had not the authority of so
 grave and faithful an historian as their own
Thuanus, who among other questions, proposed
 this to the evil spirit in a pretended *Demoniac* :
 “ What place of scripture there was by which
 “ purgatory must evidently be proved.”

But to return: *Bellarmino* tells us that this text
 is one of the obscurest but yet most profitable
 ones [for that purpose:] upon which * one ob-
 serves, “ So illustriously manifest is their cause
 “ in the scriptures, that its highest advantages
 “ are the deepest obscurities, and its clearest
 “ light treasur’d up in the profoundest dark-
 “ nefs.”

But what is most to be wonder’d at is, that
 none of the *Greek* fathers could see this doctrine
 so evidently proposed in this text; *Theodoret*
 and *Theophylact* interpreting the fire here spoke
 of to be the fire of hell, and the day which
 is to reveal it the day of judgment.---And that
 the *Greek* church neither at this day does, nor
 ever did receive this doctrine, how plainly so-
 ever it is pretended by some to be held forth
 in the scripture.---From whence by the way,
 as was observed long ago, “ we need no clearer
 “ evidence to shew that the whole business of
 “ purgatory is but an error of the *Latin* church,
 “ and not an article of the *Catholick* faith.†

I have

* Mr. *Bramstone*’s texts examined, &c.

† Archbishop’s discourse of purgatory, p. 43.

I have been the longer upon this text, because it is set foremost in the list of those which our modern author saith, the fathers and ecclesiastical writers interpret of purgatory ; and because the answer I have given to this may be applied to all the rest they alledge, as far as I am directly concern'd. I mean that none of them are plain and clear enough to found an article of faith upon, and so put us to difficulty when we affirm that the doctrine of purgatory satisfaction stands in opposition to that of atonement by Christ's blood.---And if any of the labourers in the *Roman* harvest, who at present swarm among us, tell you otherwise, I shall only say, let them pitch upon one single text which by the unanimous consent of the fathers is to be taken and interpreted of purgatory in the sense of the present church of *Rome*, and they shall receive satisfaction.

Will they pretend this of the 2d passage they produce in evidence for their doctrine of purgatory? *Matt. v. 25, 26.* Is the *prison* there spoken of, out of which men must *not come 'till they have paid the uttermost farthing*, the prison of purgatory, according to the unanimous consent of the fathers? They mention only *Cyprian*, and him very wrongfully, as the archbishop of *Canterbury* has proved in the excellent discourse I have referred to ; and the long passage I repeated to you before out of that father, seems very little to agree with the point they would fain have him bear testimony to.---And many such passages might be easily produced to shew the opinion of the primitive writers to have been,
that

that the souls of the godly immediately, after their separation from the body, pass into a place of bliss and happiness.----They never dream'd of their paying the uttermost farthing in purgatory-prison.----I know, indeed, they represented them as in a state of expectation, looking and waiting for the day of judgment; (which *Tertullian* elegantly expresses, [*in candidâ expectare diem judicii*] alluding to the candidates or suitors for preferments among the *Romans*,) but of purgatory pains in the intermediate state, it does not appear they knew any thing. And when then may we expect a text which they all agree to expound of the *Romish* purgatory? Let me only add, what one would think should put our present missionaries a little out of countenance, when they cite this passage out of *St. Matthew* to support their fable, that several of their own learned men put a quite different interpretation upon it. *

A third text we are presented with in the forementioned *profession*, &c. is that *Matt. xii. 32.* *It shall not be forgiven him neither in this world, neither in the world to come.* “Which words, saith the author, &c. plainly imply that some sins which are not forgiven in this world, may be forgiven in the world to come.” But is this interpretation according to the unanimous consent of the fathers, or of their own doctors either? The contrary is full well known. I know they can quote *St. Austin* for this notion in general, (tho’ he never, I believe, dream’d of their purgatory) and that from this text, that there

* Particularly *Maldonate*, a Jesuit.

there may be some future remission of sins after this life ; but what remission, or of what sins, he declares he dares not aver, and in several places expresses himself doubtful about it ; and therefore his authority in the interpretation of this passage, is very unfit to make it a ground for an article of faith.----Nay, *Bellarmino* himself acknowledges, that according to the rules of logic, purgatory cannot be inferr'd from it. And really, a text from whence a doctrine cannot be inferr'd by the rules of logic, is a very indifferent foundation for a canon with an anathema annexed to it.----

However, one would think that St. *Mark* and St. *Luke* were better interpreters of their brother *Matthew*, than all fathers and doctors put together ; and their sense is, that those who commit the sin against the Holy Ghost, shall *never be forgiven.* * But suppose our Saviour's expression in *Matthew* does intimate a forgiveness expected in the world to come, why must this relate to purgatory ? Why, it cannot be in hell, for there is no forgiveness---right---nor in heaven, for there is no sin---true.---But is there no forgiveness to be expected at the place, where *God will judge the world in righteousness, by the man whom he has ordain'd ?* *Acts* xvii. 31. Shall not true believers be openly acknowledged and *acquitted* at the day of judgment ? Will not your *sins be blotted out when the times of refreshment shall come from the presence of the Lord ?* *Acts* iii. 19. And did not the fathers understand this place of the last day ?
tho'

* See *Mark* iii. 29. *Luke* xii. 10.

tho' some Protestants † refer it to the destruction of *Jerusalem*. I shall only ask, where all nations shall be gather'd before the judge, and from whence they are to go into life eternal, or everlasting punishment? and may say, the sins that have not been forgiven here, shall not be forgiven there.

This may be a sufficient answer to their argument from this text; and I might add, that if our Saviour designed an intimation of any expectations that men might form of forgiveness in another world, he might possibly have an eye to a common notion among the *Jews* to whom he spake, *viz.* "That not only in the
" kingdom of the *Messiah*, but in the state after death, remission might be had for some
" sins, which could not otherwise be forgiven." But whatever our Saviour might farther mean, if he designed to intimate any thing beside what he plainly declared, that the sin against the Holy Ghost was utterly irremissible, surely it could not be the purgatory of the *Romanists*; for *these* men are to satisfy, not to be pardoned. "What, saith our archbishop, * have we
" here to do with remission of sins? Purgatory is a place not where sins are remitted,
" but where they are punished with the greatest severity. Nay, what is still more, punished after they are remitted; nay, what is
" still more extraordinary, therefore punished because they are remitted; for if the guilt
" were not remitted, the sinner could not go
F to

† *Grotius* and *Hammond*.

* *Disc. of Purg.* p. 20.

“ to purgatory, nor have the favour of being
“ punished there.”

Thus I have considered those texts which our adversaries seem to lay most stress upon, and which appear least impertinent to their purpose. Nor should I think it worth while to mention any more of *Bellarmino's* 19 texts; but in compliment to our modern authors, I must take notice of the fourth scripture he alledges, which the Cardinal, it seems, overlook'd, *1 Pet. iii. 18, 19, 20.* where Christ is said, by his spirit, to have gone and *preached to the spirits in prison, which some time were disobedient.* * “ Which prison, “ says he, could be no other than purgatory.” But do the fathers and their own doctors unanimously agree in this interpretation of the difficult text? Surely they would, if it was plain enough to ground an article of faith. I shall only farther ask, Did these disobedient people die in mortal sin, or in a state of grace? If the former, they went to hell; if the latter, to *Limbus*, a place where there is no torment: And what then is become of the argument for purgatory from this passage? At least is it evident to all unprejudiced persons, that the apostle in this place has reference to that doctrine? Nor is this the only obscure text they alledge in proof of their doctrine; but resolving to puzzle the cause, they have recourse to another which has been thought one of the hardest to be understood in the whole New Testament, *1 Cor. xv. 29, Else what shall they do that are baptised for the dead?* It's pity we have not the unanimous

* Profess. &c. p. 36.

mous consent of the fathers for the interpretation of this text ; perhaps then we should know what to make of it, but till such an explication be produc'd, we must be excused from admitting it as a proof of their new article of faith.--- And if we could suppose it would be taken well, for hereticks to explain a difficult passage of scripture, which has puzzled so many of their own doctors, I would refer them to a very probable account given of this place by a learned gentleman, in a * book published a few years ago.

Now to conclude this part of the argument : from what has been said, I infer that there is no plain scripture proof for purgatory, and consequently it ought to be rejected as being in direct opposition to the scripture doctrine of justification by faith in the *blood of Jesus Christ the Son of God*, which (rightly apply'd to) perfectly and fully *cleanseth from all sin*; and the objection from scripture is answered.

2. But secondly they alledge *tradition* ; but till our opponents have answered the fifth sermon in this course, upon the head of *scripture* and *tradition*, I may be allow'd to take no notice of their objection from thence. However, to what I have hinted before, of purgatory being a novel doctrine, and contrary to the sense of the Catholick church, for at least the first four centuries, I shall add a passage of the learned bishop *Bull*, in his answer to a letter written from Monsieur *de Meaux* to Mr. *Nelson*, †

F 2

which

* Fortuita sacra, Rotterodami 1727. p. 137, &c.

† Sect. 3. p. 278.

which I will leave our friends of the church of
Rome to consider: " The doctrine, saith he,
 " of indulgences, as taught in the church of
 " *Rome*, depends upon the fiction of purgato-
 " ry; it supposeth a superfluity of the satisfa-
 " ctions of the saints, which being jumbled
 " together with the merits and satisfaction of
 " our Saviour, makes up one treasure of the
 " church; that the bishop of *Rome* keeps the
 " key of it,----Is not this now, saith he, a do-
 " ctrine worthy of a place in our creed, and to
 " be made an article of the Catholick faith.---
 " He adds, That the doctrine and use of in-
 " dulgences were never heard of in the church
 " of Christ for many hundred years, is certain,
 " and confessed too by divers learned men of
 " the *Roman* communion. I shall cite only one
 " of them, saith the bishop, but he such a one
 " as may be *instar omnium*: our *Roffensis* [*Fis-
 " sher*, bishop of *Rocheſter*] *Luther's* great an-
 " tagonist, and *Rome's* martyr, gives us this
 " account of indulgences. Many perhaps are
 " tempted not to rely much upon indulgences,
 " upon this consideration, that the use of them
 " appears to be new, and very lately known
 " among Christians. To whom I answer, it
 " is not very certain who was the first author
 " of them. The doctrine of purgatory was
 " rarely, if at all heard of amongst the an-
 " cients, and to this very day the *Greeks* be-
 " lieve it not; nor was the belief either of pur-
 " gatory or indulgences so necessary in the
 " primitive church as it is now. So long as
 " men were unconcerned about purgatory, no
 body

“ body enquired after indulgences; for upon
 “ that depends all the worth of indulgences; take
 “ away purgatory, and there is no more need of
 “ these. Seeing therefore purgatory was so late-
 “ ly known and received in the universal
 “ church, who will wonder that in the first
 “ ages of the church indulgences were not
 “ made use of? ” *

3. In the last place they urge *reason*; and truly if that be on their side, the Protestants will be hard set. But how do they ground their belief of purgatory upon reason? “ They answer, because reason clearly teaches these two things: 1. That all or every sin, how small soever, deserves punishment. 2. That some sins are so small, either thro’ the levity of the matter, or for want of full deliberation in the action, as not to deserve eternal punishment. From whence, say they, it is plain, that besides the place of eternal punishment, which we call hell, there must be also a place of temporal punishment for little sins, which we call purgatory.” † And that I may throw all their reasoning (such as it is) together: “ They say such as depart this life before they have repented for those venial frailties and imperfections cannot be supposed to be condemned to the eternal torment of hell, since the sins they are guilty of are but small, which even God’s best servants are liable to.---Nor can they go strait to heaven in this state, because the scripture assures us, *There shall in no wise enter thither any thing* “ that

* Act. 18. contra Lutherum.

† Profess. &c. p. 37.

“ *that defileth*,----and our Saviour assures us,
 “ that we are to *render an account for every idle*
 “ *word*. And they farther plead, that *God will*
 “ *render to every one according to his works*.
 “ Now, say they, this would not be true if there
 “ were no such thing as purgatory.”

But in answer to all this,

1. We allow that every sin deserves punishment, seeing it is a transgression of the law.

2. We allow that all transgressions of the law are not equally heinous.

3. We allow particularly that there is a vast difference between the common infirmities of good men, and the wilful offences of wicked transgressors.

4. But that any sin is in its own nature venial, so as not to deserve eternal punishment, if God should proceed in a way of rigorous justice, we cannot presently agree to grant; but must expect their proof that some acts of disobedience to God cannot justly be punish'd with everlasting destruction.

5. Especially they must prove this of all venial sins as such; of which if they please to look over their catalogues, they will find many much worse than some they call mortal;* particularly than the mortal sin of denying purgatory and its appendages, and other peculiar doctrines of the church.

6. But to come home to the matter; with what reasons will they prove, that if the justice of God may deliver believers from the pains of eternal

* See *Clarkson*, ut *suprà*.

eternal death, he may not upon the same account remit all temporal penalties, and take them directly into a state of rest without passing thro' the fire of purgatory? Is not justice satisfied by the sufferings of the Son of God? and then what need of farther satisfaction? Or are they not morally qualified to have the benefit of Christ's sacrifice, by being penitent believers? Is not their repentance an habitual disposition? Do they not exercise it daily? Are they not bringing the *sacrifices of God, a broken and contrite heart*, to God by Christ Jesus continually? and if when *no man can understand his errors*, they should not have actually repented of an *idle word* (in the sense of this author) or any ordinary failing, is it reasonable to imagine that departing this life in God's grace, in a state of friendship with him, thro' the mediation of his Son, and the sanctification of the Spirit; is it reasonable, I say, to imagine that they are liable to burn in a temporary hell, and for ought we know, for some ages, before they can enter into rest? and this too not for further moral preparation, but merely to make satisfaction? I appeal to every serious mind, whether it does not appear at first sight reasonable, that, if the *blood of Christ cleanseth from all sin*, and *there is no condemnation to them that are in him*, and *who walk not after the flesh but after the spirit*, there needs no other method of purgation or satisfaction,---and that if there needs no other, there can be no other; because infinite wisdom would not appoint that for which there is no occasion, and infinite goodness would be sure not

not to prescribe any thing grievous and distressing without a real necessity for it.

7. But I must come a little closer to these men of reason, and ask whether it is not as reasonable that God should receive such as I have described immediately into a state of joy and felicity, as that he should take the worst of sinners who die immediately after their baptism, or who are any way murder'd for their religion, or such as are assail'd from mortal sins by attrition and the sacraments, if they have an interest in certain merits; I say, that God should take such directly into heaven, and make them partakers of the beatifical vision? If this be reason, I must own myself in a wrong way of thinking.

8. Lastly, I have one word more to say to them, *viz.* I wonder with what face they can pretend to reason us out of so many plain texts which assert our doctrine of forgiveness as before stated, when in spite of scripture, tradition, reason and common sense, they would obtrude upon us their doctrine of *Transubstantiation* upon the authority of their *Hoc est Corpus meum, This is my body*, which we have evidently proved to be nothing to their purpose.* I can't help saying, Do these men talk of reason!

IV. I am to make a few remarks upon the whole.

1. Let us see what ground we have not only to *reject* the Romish doctrine of purgatory

* See Dr. Harris's Sermon,

tory as having no foundation in scripture, (which is enough to spoil the credit of any opinion that would set up for an article of faith) but to reject it with *abhorrence* as being contrary to scripture, and particularly that essential article of forgiveness of all sin thro' the blood of Christ. It may indeed be justly enough ridiculed, but it ought to be detested by all those who *honour God and love the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity.*

2. Let us observe the reason we have to bless God, that we have the scriptures, a perfect rule for our faith and practice : and that we have them in a language we understand, and are allowed to judge for ourselves of what they contain : that we are not obliged to receive any thing as a truth of God, or appointment of Christ, but what we find there ; and may reject any thing that appears contrary to the word of God, whatever power pretends to impose it ; and may slight their *anathemas*, as a *curse causeless* which *shall not come.*

And let us be thankful also that we live under a government which allows us to keep our Bibles, and take our religion out of them, and make publick profession of it too, without incurring the penalties of an *inquisition*, or the *wholsome severities* which our fathers felt, and some of us remember. Let us bless God for the Reformation, and the security given to it by the Revolution, and the prospect we have of its continuance under the protection of his most gracious Majesty and his illustrious house : for whom let us pray, and for *all that are in authority, that under them we may lead a quiet and*

peaceable life in all godliness and honesty. And let us take care that we *submit ourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake, whether it be to the king as supreme, or unto governors as unto them that are sent by him, for the punishment of evil-doers, and the praise of them that do well,* 1 Pet. ii. 13, &c. And seeing God has made us free, as *free let us not use our liberty for a cloak of maliciousness,* ver. 14. *that with well-doing we may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men:* that they may be out of countenance when they call us *rebels*, as they ought to be when they call us *hereticks*.

3. From what has been offer'd there is reason to encourage *good men* not to be *frighten'd* with an imaginary danger of purgatory-fire. *If we walk in the light as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another,* [have communion with the Catholick church] *and the blood of Jesus Christ his son cleanseth from all sin,* and we need fear no further reckoning. I have shew'd the pleas of our adversaries from scripture, tradition, and reason, to be vain; do not let them therefore terrify us with their *Ignis fatuus* out of our senses, as they fain would do to persuade us out of our money, which I am satisfied is really the bottom of the business. The *fire* of purgatory is like the *thunder* of the *Vatican*, a harmless thing, which no wise man would be afraid of, were it not too often connected with tortures, massacres, and assassinations: otherwise it would be regarded as fit only to frighten children, as those stories of apparitions are, which *Bellarmino* makes use of to confirm his doctrine of purgatory;

purgatory ; to which argument I hope you'll excuse me that I have not return'd a particular answer.

4. *Lastly, no wicked man should encourage himself by this fiction of purgatory to continue in sin, and neglect the gospel salvation, which teacheth to deny ungodliness and all worldly lusts, and to live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world.* Do not let men imagine that attrition, with the sacrament of penance, will secure them from hell, and that they may escape purgatory too, if they have money to pay for indulgences, &c.-----No, my friends, remember that *without holiness no man shall see the Lord*, and that even the blood and righteousness of Christ itself cannot save those who will not repent and be converted. Away with all things that pretend to be substituted in the room of *righteousness and true holiness*; and remember that though there be no purgatory, there is a *hell*, where *the worm dies not, and the fire is not quenched.* From which God of his infinite mercy save us through the blood of his dear Son. *Amen.*

F I N I S.



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